

2012 PRESIDING JUDGE'S REPORT TO THE JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD

**Randy R. Koschnick, Chief Judge
Jefferson County Circuit Court**

Court System Efficiency and Public Safety

The Jefferson County Circuit Court consistently ranks at the top of the list of Wisconsin's 72 counties for timely processing of cases as measured by the Overall Median Age at Disposition Report. In 2012, we were ranked #1 statewide for the fifth time in the past six years. Unlike many other Wisconsin counties, case backlogs are not a problem in Jefferson County. Timely disposition of court cases insures that justice is fairly dispensed without undue delay, that public safety is maintained and that taxpayer-funded system resources are used efficiently.

Personnel

The Branch 3 Circuit Court Judge position remains vacant as of this writing, following Judge Jackie Erwin's retirement earlier this year. The workload for Branch 3 has been taken over by the remaining Circuit Court Judges (primarily Judge Jennifer Weston) along with several part-time Reserve Judges. We hope and expect that Governor Walker will appoint a successor in the near future who will then stand for election in Spring, 2014. The election will be for a six year term.

Court Commissioner Mark Fremgen was hired in 2012 to replace Barb McCrory, who resigned her Jefferson County Court Commissioner position following her election as Circuit Court Judge in Rock County. Commissioner Fremgen brings with him a wealth of experience from his former Court Commissioner position in Winnebago County.

Courthouse Security

All of the judges are very appreciative of the fact that this Board recently approved the construction of a new Courthouse security entrance. This new security entrance will significantly increase safety for all Courthouse users, including employees, litigants and members of the general public. The quality and efficiency of justice also improve when security is enhanced as judges and litigants are better able to focus on their legal work and be less preoccupied with matters of bodily security.

Videoconferencing

Videoconference equipment is installed and operational in three of our four courtrooms which allows incarcerated, hospitalized and physically distant parties to appear and participate in court proceedings without the significant transportation expenses which are typically incurred by the Sheriff's Department. We also utilize the videoconference system daily for bail hearings in an effort to improve courtroom security and to make more efficient use of the Sheriff's jail staff.

Each videoconference system pays for itself within two to three years based on actual savings in transport costs. Videoconference equipment for the remaining courtroom is in the Clerk of Court's five year capital plan for 2014.

Conclusion

The Jefferson County Circuit Court System continues to be a leader statewide in delivering high quality justice and effective public protection in a timely and cost-effective manner. The judges know that we couldn't do so without the support that we receive from the Jefferson County Supervisors. We look forward to a positive, cooperative working relationship where we continue to work together with you to maintain and enhance the high quality of life that we all enjoy in Jefferson County.